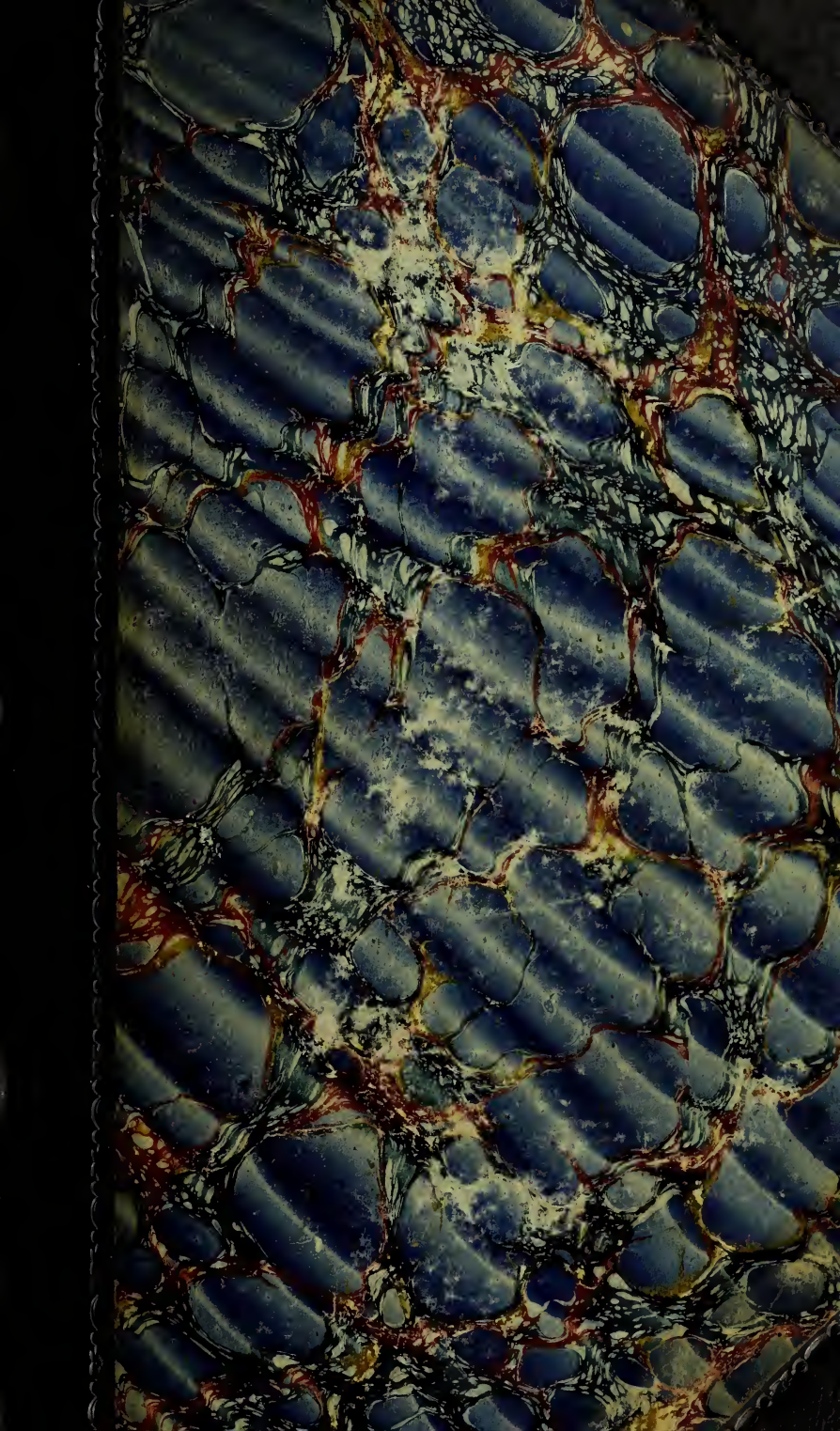

REFLECTIONS

OCCASIONED

BY THE PERUSAL OF A PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED,

A VINDICATION

OF THE

OPINIONS

DELIVERED BY THE

MEDICAL WITNESSES FOR THE CROWN,

(THE PROSECUTION)

ON A LATE TRIAL AT LANCASTER.

By D. CAMPBELL, M. D.

"*Mere authority*, in such case, is but *assertion repeated*. We must not attend to what men *say*, but to what they can *prove*."

LIVERPOOL:

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REFLECTIONS, &c.

WHATEVER reluctance a person may have to take up the weapons of controversy, there are provocations, which it would not be prudent, if it were possible, to pass over without notice. To continue silent under an injurious insinuation, might, with some, be deemed a proof of its being admitted by him at whom it is levelled.

But before I can advance another step in my present purpose, I find it necessary to deprecate the interference of a powerful, but improper auxiliary, which has hitherto accompanied, and ranged itself by the side of those, with whom I am to contend.

The opinions which agitate and divide mankind, are, for the most part, derived from two separate sources, reason and prejudice; and, although the distinction be universally admitted, yet it is not strange, that scarcely any one will al-

low himself to be the person whose judgment is influenced by the less creditable motive. There are, however, certain marks by which they are distinguishable by the eye of an indifferent observer. The opinions which are deduced from reason, are assumed slowly, after deliberation, and hearing what can be assigned on either side of the question; and they are always liable to be displaced if a better argument is brought forward. On the contrary, those from prejudice are taken up hastily, and if once received, are, for the most part, immovable; because the slow stages of proof, having been passed over in a cursory manner, to arrive at the conclusion; when this is once attained, every thing that can give it strength is readily taken in; and whatever has a tendency to unsettle it, is received with coldness, and speedily dismissed as an unwelcome intruder.

Yet there is nothing, which it is the duty of every rational being to guard against, more than the effects of prejudice, especially when directed to persons suspected, or accused of having committed great crimes; because the detestation of vice, which is inherent in every good mind, so easily excites an abhorrence of the person supposed capable of perpetrating it, that many of the most marked instances of injustice and cruelty which

stain the pages of history, have been committed, from allowing prejudice to supply the place of proof, by suspicion and conjecture. The wisdom and humanity of the laws of our excellent constitution, recognize and provide against this infirmity of human nature; and, acknowledging that justice cannot be administered where strong prejudices prevail, exclude from the office of Jurors, those who are known to be under such influence. And as it is necessary, in some instances, to fall back to a distant situation, to be enabled to obtain a view of all the parts of a building; it may be equally so in others, to recede from a scene of tumult, before a correct or impartial opinion can be formed of the causes that produced it. To those who have not irrevocably made up their minds on the subject to which this refers, I respectfully submit the perusal of the following reflections.

On a late trial at Lancaster, of Mr. Angus, for the murder of Miss Burns, I received a *Subpœna* on the part of the Prisoner, in consequence of which I attended in court, but did not give any evidence or opinion. This Trial, which lasted more than nineteen hours, has since been published. The indictment; the speech of the Attorney General on opening the prosecution; the evidence of the witnesses, as well for the prosecution as

for the prisoner; his defence; and the summing up of the evidence by the learned Judge, together with his charge to the Jury; were all taken in Short-Hand by Mr. Jones, jun. of Liverpool, with uncommon accuracy.

After that which had passed in court had been thus accurately recorded, it might have been supposed that enough had been done to gratify public curiosity, or to promulgate individual evidence; and that the witnesses who had given their testimony as disinterested persons, would have allowed the case to rest on its own intrinsic merits. But not so with certain medical practitioners at Liverpool; they, from unimpassioned and impartial witnesses, have transformed themselves into zealous party-men; have fought the battle of opinions over again (although they were, from their own account, completely masters of the field); have called in, as auxiliaries, all who could be enlisted or subsidized into their service,

Fortemque Gyan, fortemque Cloanthum;

And after the most strenuous exertions to affix ignorance on the head, and depravity at the heart of a fellow-labourer, who differed from them, not on a matter of fact, but on inferences in medical reasoning, (at every step of which, the accession of

a new discovery is capable of inducing a change of sentiment), they have also discharged some side blows on my head; which, under the reserve in which I held my sentiments on the subject, I contend to be at once unmerited and illiberal.

Had the conduct which these gentlemen have adopted with regard to myself, extended in its consequences no farther than to the individual, I should scarcely have deemed it of importance enough to deserve the attention of the public; but should the example they have set, be repeated and acted upon, there will be an entire revolution in the administration of justice in this country, as far as medical testimony is concerned; and an end put to that practice in our courts, which not only allows, but requires evidence on both sides of a question, previous to discussion. For, if a man for the mere performance of his duty, is to be posted in the pages of a pamphlet, with an epithet and insinuations which have a tendency to sink him in the estimation of the public; and which ignorance or malice may interpret as best suits their purpose; it may become a question of personal feeling and prudence, whether it may not be more adviseable to submit to a pecuniary penalty, rather than that his peace of mind should be disturbed, or his reputation injured.

Under such influence as this predominant, a British court of Justice would degenerate into something but little removed from a revolutionary tribunal, where the accused were allowed the benefit of an advocate and witnesses; but these were certain to receive the guillotine, as the consequence of their services. The difference is merely in degree; and yet if a man is to be deprived of his character, and consequently of the means of obtaining the bread, which subsists himself and his family, I know not but the French, as the more expeditious, may be also the more merciful proceeding.

The right, indeed, which every subject who is put upon his trial, has to call upon such witnesses as he may deem necessary to his defence, to come into court, and answer such questions as shall be demanded of them, is so indubitable; that we find the men who are refusing the practice in the present instance, except under a penalty, admitting the truth of the general principle.

In page 84 of their Vindication, they tell us "that such is the obscurity that hangs over many morbid actions and appearances in the human body, that the best and most conscientious men may differ in opinion upon them, without any impeachment of their judgement, or any doubt of the rec-

titude of their motives;" and yet their pamphlet, as far as I am able to understand its drift, goes to question the rectitude of a person who gave a medical opinion different from theirs, and to injure his character as a physician and a man. In proof of which they expressly say " we shall be greatly mistaken if Dr. Carson should not experience this consequence of his proceedings in his future intercourse with a great majority of the faculty in Liverpool. But the unfavourable impression which his evidence has made, is not confined to the faculty, or to the inhabitants of Liverpool, it extends through the whole county and beyond it." Perhaps to as great a distance, as the influence of these gentlemen can give it currency.

They then go on to state, " If, however, it should be asked, has not Dr. Carson the same right to form his own opinions on this case as we had? We answer, most unquestionably he had. We would never even dream of complaining of any man for differing with us in opinion, or for any opinions which he may think proper to entertain, however singular and extravagant they may be. The right of private judgement on every subject of human investigation ought never to be questioned." It is so extraordinary, that men should be found to write a pamphlet in direct opposition to the max-

ims, they themselves lay down, that I confess the conduct of these gentlemen is to me wholly unaccountable.

The first place in which I am personally alluded to, is at page 59, where it is stated, " These questions must, no doubt, have been suggested to the Counsel by this witness, or his coadjutor, Dr. Campbell."*

We have been told " there is much virtue in an *If*; but this monosyllable has no chance with the potent words *No doubt:* they are made to contain in themselves any thing that is wanted: they are the *Major*, *Minor*, and conclusion of their syllogism; I only wonder they had not used them as a motto for their pamphlet. No one can surely hesitate to give his perfect assent to a charge, made out by such unanswerable reasoning.

* The scope of these questions was to the following effect.

Upon the supposition that a woman had been delivered of a child at nearly its full growth, and that, subsequent to the separation of the *Placenta*, the *Uterus* did not contract in the usual manner, would not a hæmorrhage take place, and coagulated blood be found in its cavity?

It is difficult to conceive why an impartial witness, should feel any annoyance at such a question being put to him; or find any difficulty in answering it.

Whether the questions alluded to were either suggested by Dr. Carson or myself, it was, notwithstanding the unqualified boldness of the assertion, impossible for these gentlemen to *know:* It is like most of the essential parts of their evidence in Court, and of their pamphlet, founded on *conjecture.* In point of fact, I can aver, that the particular question alluded to, (and which cannot be answered in the usual way, without breaking in upon these gentlemen's hypothesis) was not suggested by me. Nor should the learned counsel for the prisoner be deprived of any part of the credit which is so justly their due, for the great ability, (exclusively their own,) which was conspicuous on the cross-examination of all, but particularly of the medical witnesses: in the course of which, I do not perceive any question put to them, which could hurt their feelings as gentlemen ; or that had any other tendency than a further elucidation of the truth, and of the opinions deducible from the facts stated; *the whole* of which, would not have come out, had their evidence closed with the examination on the part of the prosecution.

The reason assigned by these gentlemen for publishing their " Vindication," &c. is stated at page 87, to have been, that Dr. Carson " did not

allow the matter quietly to subside after the trial," but how does this apply to a man who was passive and silent, and whose opinions for any thing they knew to the contrary, might have accorded with their own?

At pages 8 and 9, they tell us, " after the evidence on the part of the prosecution had closed, there appeared as witness on behalf of the prisoner, Dr. James Carson," &c. and " that they thought her (Miss Burns) life had *probably* been terminated by poison, that Dr. Carson, in his evidence on the trial, endeavouerd to explain the appearances on quite different grounds from theirs," *(hinc illæ lachrymæ!)* " and it has since been *generally supposed*, that, in consequence of the doubts which he had thrown on the medical evidence for the crown, the prisoner was acquitted," which evidence and its consequences, " occasioned uncommon indignation against him." In which the medical evidences appear to have cordially participated; and which, by a catenation, not to be mistaken, they endeavour to extend to me also, as being his *Coadjutor.*

Now, with respect to any opinions which Dr. Carson delivered in Court that day, whether I may assent to or dissent from them, I do assure

the Public, that he is not indebted to me for the suggestion of any idea he there promulgated.—But I do not wonder at men associated for any purpose similar to that of the authors of the "Vindication," transferring the feelings which influence their own actions to those of others; gregarious animals, conscious of individual imbecility, compensate the defect by an aggregate of numbers; four upon one is not consonant with English notions of courage, but if a *Coadjutor* could be shoved in, the odds might not appear quite so bad. I am not ashamed, however, to be the coadjutor of Dr. Carson, or of a much less honourable man, in the discharge of my professional duties, by the elucidation of medical facts, or the detection of medical fallacies; especially when these last are attempted to be imposed on the world under the influence of *party;* the last of all ingredients admissible in discussing a question of science.

The next notice taken of me is at p. 73, in which they express "their surprize at seeing Dr. Carson in Court, seated by the side of *Dr. Campbell*, of *Kendall*," *(was it not an open Court of Justice?)* "immediately behind the prisoner's counsel during the cross-examination. Not that we conceive there was any thing improper in their conduct in

assisting counsel to investigate the truth," *(what, then, is the purport of this remark!)* " but their appearance in that particular situation, was a decisive proof of the part they had taken." &c.— They then add in a note, " we are surprised at the part this gentleman took in the affair, he never saw the appearances, nor, as far as we have been able to learn, did he write to any of his medical acquaintances in Liverpool to enquire into the nature of them, which information he might have easily obtained." Had I done so, I might indeed have been described as having *taken a part* in the business; but, in the name of common sense, how could I be supposed to be more interested in this trial, (to all the parties concerned in which I was a perfect stranger) than in any other, which may occur in the course of an Assizes at Lancaster? But the imputation of having *taken a part* in a cause, to one who attends in a Court of Justice, in consequence of a legal summons, is not merely a violation of candour, but, in its inference, of truth also. The part which I took was not sought; it was forced upon me by an obligation which I could not evade without violating the duty which I owe to society, and to my country, as an Englishman. By my words or by my actions, either in that Court, or in any other place, I am contented to stand or fall; but I will not submit to

have unworthy motives assigned, for actions, in themselves innocent or laudable, to serve the purposes of any association. No man can justly, have blame attached to him, for paying obedience to the laws of his country. Nor will I for a moment, acknowledge the imputation, that in consequence of my having been called on the part of the prisoner, I occupied a less honourable station, than they who appeared for the prosecution, (or for the *Crown*, as they style themselves.) This idea seems, however, to have taken so strong a hold of these gentlemen, that they have constituted themselves arbiters, snatched the rod from the hand of justice, and are dealing their blows without regard to the admonitions of her balance, or to her concomitant attribute of mercy, on persons who, as long as the practice of our Courts remains, must be opposed to each other. In truth, I almost wonder how the Judge and the Jury have escaped.

Having proceeded thus far, in controverting the propriety of their conduct, principally as it affects myself, personally, I do certainly feel a disposition to go on, and examine their right to the high tone of *certainty*, which they have assumed as to the conclusions to be deduced from the appearances observed on the body, of the un-

fortunate, and I will add, cruelly treated, Miss Burns. But I think it, at any rate, necessary to pause a little, whilst here, as it were *in limine;* and to enquire whether it may be in any degree consistent with prudence, to go on. For if the mere *suspicion* of entertaining an opinion different from *theirs*, was a sufficient cause for shaking the rod over my head; what will be the consequence of an avowed dissent from their conclusions?

One would scarcely think it possible, but yet it seems to be the case, that these gentlemen have assumed to themselves the right of decrying and punishing (in reputation at least) all who do not accord exactly with themselves on this subject. Do they really think that the conclusions they have drawn from the premises, are so decisive, that no one can refuse his assent, except such as are disposed to palliate or abet the crime, of which the prisoner was accused?

The question at issue has no more to do with Charles Angus, personally, than with John Doe, or any fictitious character in a proceeding at law. If the general principles which constitute what ought to be received in evidence, attach to his case, he must be deemed culpable, in the eyes of all men. But to establish a charge against an

individual, through the medium of popular odium or clamour, (however excited) which would not convict a more favoured character, is not consistent with any principles of justice : and would establish a most dangerous precedent. My object is not to defeat but promote the ends of justice; for if any necessary part of the truth be withheld, justice cannot exist. And, if it be *true*, that the appearances upon which these gentlemen found their opinions, may proceed from various causes; and that they are not, from their own telling, in possession of the knowledge necessary for distinguishing them; it will follow, that their conclusions are not warrantable in this, or any similar case.

At page 18 of their Vindication, they observe, "It is of the utmost consequence that the truth in this case should be ascertained. By such an investigation, not only will the question in dispute be decided, but what is of more consequence, opinions founded on false and fallacious grounds, may, perhaps, be prevented from being regarded hereafter on any similar occasion, as equivalent in evidence to those, which are considered by the profession at large, to be founded on the solid basis of experience and observation?"

Now, it so happens, that these are precisely the reasons which influence my conduct in an opposite direction ; and if they have felt it a duty to state *their* reasons why persons under similar circumstances with Miss Burns, should be deemed to have been deprived of life by poison ; I may equally feel it mine, to state *why* I think the appearances on which they have formed their opinions, do not lead to that conclusion. And this the more especially, as these gentlemen, are not for confining their doctrine, to the single instance before them ; but are desirous of extending it, to be the rule of conduct to be adopted, in all future similar cases. It therefore becomes highly necessary to investigate the truth of inferences, which they would have us regard as *medical authorities.*

Before I enter upon a discussion of the question, whether there was evidence before the Court, (putting Dr. Carson's out of the question,) to convince them, that the death of Miss Burns was occasioned by poison ; it may not be improper to state some preliminaries, by which my conclusions will be influenced.

In the charge to the Jury, given by the late Judge Buller, on the trial of Captain Donellan, for the murder of Sir Theodosius Boughton by poi-

son; he observed to the Jury, that they would have "two objects to consider; first, whether the deceased did die by *poison?*—secondly, Whether the person suspected did assist in *administering it?*"

It would follow from this, that to convict a person of the crime of murdering by poison, it is requisite that these two points should be established. And if such be the case, the imputation cast upon Dr. Carson (page 9 of the "Vindication") that "in consequence of the doubts which he had thrown upon the medical evidence for the Crown, the prisoner was acquitted," will fall to the ground: because, had he remained as silent as myself, the acquital of Mr. Angus must have taken place, from the prosecutors having failed to make out their case, respecting this point, upon better grounds than *conjecture.**

* "After all this supposition, should you really be of opinion that she had taken something or other, which had occasioned that hole, and so brought about her death; still it will be for you to enquire whether that was done by the deceased herself, or whether the prisoner at the bar was concerned in the act." *Judge's charge, p. 276 of the Trial.*

"A charge of this sort, Gentlemen, requires to be made out with the greatest satisfaction. It is very unfortunate that, upon every particular point, we are to rest upon conjecture." *Judge's charge to the Jury, p. 283 of Angus's Trial.*

With respect to the question, whether the death of Miss Burns was occasioned by poison, the two great, and indispensible proofs, her having *taken* the article; or its being *found* in her body, are wanting.

As there was not any attempt to bring proof, of the poison having been *administered* by the prisoner; neither was there of its having been *taken at all*, by the deceased.

And the medical evidences on the part of the prosecution state, that they could not, after the application of the nicest chemical tests, detect the poisonous articles, to which her death was imputed, *in the contents of her stomach.*

How, then, do these gentlemen infer, that she died in consequence of having taken the poisonous articles alluded to (arsenic or corrosive sublimate)? Because, as they tell us, they found a *hole or erosion in the stomach*, which they believed to be the cause of her death; and that the hole was produced by the poisonous articles just mentioned.

That inflammation, gangrene and erosion both of the stomach and intestines, can be produced

by the poisonous substances alluded to, there is not a doubt. But it is equally true, that inflammation, gangrene and erosion of these parts, do also occur where there is not the most distant suspicion that these, or any similar substances, have given rise to such appearances. Whoever will take the trouble to turn to *Lieutaud's Historia Anatomica*, will find in the chapters entitled *Ulcus Ventriculi*; and *Ventriculus disrupsus et perforatus;* nearly fifty instances of *erosions* of the stomach recorded, many of which could have no reference to poison as their cause.

We then ask these gentlemen, by what means they distinguish betwixt the hole or erosion produced in this case, and such as they believe to occur in consequence of natural causes? It must be obvious to every impartial person, that this distinction is necessary to be clearly made out, to give due credibility to their testimony.

I here contend, that this knowledge (in the deficiency of any evidence that the poisonous matter has been taken, or found in the body) can be only acquired in two ways:

I. As the result of actual (and repeated) observation, that the poison alluded to, produced

appearances of so peculiar a nature, that they could be ascertained, and distinguished from all others—or

II. By the method which these gentlemen have chosen to adopt, and which is by Logicians termed, *Reductio ad absurdum.* In this mode of argument, assuming that there are only a given number of causes capable of producing the hole in question; they attempt to prove that it has not been occasioned (1) by putrefaction, nor (2) by the gastric juices, nor (3) by any disease to which the organ is liable, *ergo*, it must have been the effect of poison,*

In consequence of these gentlemen having chosen this mode of establishing their opinion, I shall first proceed to examine the amount of the arguments they have adduced in support of it.

(1) As to the hole in the stomach being occasioned by *putrefaction*, I am inclined to agree with them, that it did not proceed from this cause; for if erosions of this *Viscus* could be produced in the course of *ordinary* putrefaction, they would be a frequent, instead of a rare, occurrence.

* Pages 25 and 27 of the "Vindication."

(2) Adverting to their reasoning, that the injury done to Miss Burns' stomach, was not occasioned by the action of the *gastric juices*, they have an evident reference to the cases recorded by Mr. John Hunter. But here I must beg leave to say, that the account given of these appearances by that accurate and indefatigable anatomist, consists of two distinct parts; the *Facts*, and his *theory* or *reasoning* as to what he thought had occasioned the erosions, which occurred.

As to the *Fact*, that such erosions or holes as he describes were found, there cannot be a doubt. But whether the *causes* to which he imputed them, were the real ones, is not so easily determined. That the *gastric juices*, are adequate to produce these effects, in their *ordinary state*, when persons lose their lives suddenly, and in high health, (the condition in which he inferred that they were endued with such powers,) has been much doubted by other ingenious and learned men. Indeed, if the gastric juices in their ordinary healthy state, have the powers of operating such changes in the structure of the stomach, they ought to occur, if not constantly, at least frequently, in persons who came by their deaths suddenly; which we know is not the case.

It would appear, from whatever the erosions in these instances have proceeded, that there is a cause, which sometimes produces fluids in the human body, endued with powerful corroding qualities; but which has not yet been satisfactorily accounted for. It proves, however, that erosions of the stomach and adjacent parts, do occur, which are neither the consequence of any acrid or poisonous substance taken inwardly; nor the occasion of the death of the subject in which they were discovered.

And here, before I dismiss this part of the subject, I shall beg leave to put a question to these gentlemen. Supposing they had been desired to attend the opening, and examination of the body, of one of the men mentioned by Mr. John Hunter, and, that they had been told, he had died, (not as was really the case by a stroke of a poker, but) by poison; and they, acting under this information, had found the holes and erosions in the stomach which he describes, and "which they could not account for from any disease to which that organ is liable," would, or would they not have concluded, (as in the case of Miss Burns,) that they had found so adequate a cause for the death of the deceased person, to make them deem it unnecessary, to proceed any

further in their researches? They neither examined the *Head* nor the *Thorax*, in the case of Miss Burns. Now, I would, with due deference, ask, supposing they had done so, and found a large blood vessel in the head, or near the heart ruptured, would they *then*, have ascribed Miss Burns' death, to the injury done to her stomach?*

These gentlemen do, indeed, attempt to distinguish betwixt the erosions in Mr. John Hunter's cases, and that which occurred here; by stating that *blood-vessels were seen ramifying near the openings* in his cases; whilst they *could not discover any* in that of Miss Burns: And hence they

* The omission of opening and examining the *Head* and *Thorax*, in this case, appears almost unpardonable; especially when we consider the sudden manner, in which she went off at last. It appears by the evidence of the servants, that on the third day of her illness, she dressed herself in the morning, and came down stairs: Between ten and eleven o'clock she ordered dinner, and then, having expressed a wish to have some Madeira wine, one of the servants went for it. She was absent about an hour, and on her return, found her mistress dead, "cowered of a heap," (as she expresses it) "with her elbows on her knees, and her face against the wall." It would hence, appear, that whatever the material change was, which occasioned her death; it had occurred within the period of the servant's leaving her, and her returning.

infer, that an erosion of the stomach having no marks of inflammation round the edges, is a proof of its having been occasioned by poison. But upon what authority or evidence do they found this opinion? It is *assumed, not proved. They* have never seen such an effect produced in the human stomach where a poisonous acrid substance, has been *known* to have been swallowed. Neither do they adduce, from any authority whatever, that such is the effect of arsenic, or corrosive sublimate, in the human stomach; on the contrary, we know, where bodies have been examined after taking these poisonous articles ,that inflammation and gangrene to a greater or less degree occur in the course of the intestinal canal.

Neither have these gentlemen produced an *erosion of the nature they here speak of*, in the stomachs of the dogs they have killed; or indeed *any erosion at all.* No confirmation of this opinion of theirs, is derived from any of their subsequent experiments; it, therefore, appears to rest entirely on *conjecture.*

(3) In the 25th page of their "Vindication," these gentlemen tell us, that they conclude the erosion was not the effect of disease, because

" there is no disease to which that organ is liable, which, in our opinion, could produce such appearances."

And here, in a few words, is the weak and exceptionable part of their argument; because, upon their own admissions, they are not in possession of that knowledge which will entitle them to draw the conclusions they have done, with such reasonable certainty, as to satisfy an impartial mind, upon a less momentous occasion, than when it is to affect the life of a fellow creature.

Are these gentlemen so deeply skilled in Pathology as to know *every possible morbid action*, to which the human stomach is liable? Or *every possible acrid fluid* which can be generated spontaneously, capable of occasioning an erosion of its substance?* This is a point of medical knowledge to which no man ever did, and, I suspect, none ever can, arrive; and yet upon this elevated pinnacle they must be seated, before they can be entitled to give the weight they require to opinions thus found-

* "You are told by some of these gentlemen that the deceased must have died by poison, because such and such appearances were observed in the stomach, and perhaps the greater number of instances may accord with their opinion. But are they sure that in all instances it is so."

JUSTICE CHAMBRE'S *Charge to the Jury on Angus's Trial.*

ed; before they can say, "*there is no disease to which the stomach is liable, which could produce these appearances.*" The late Mr. John Hunter, who, I believe, is allowed to have dissected more morbid subjects than any other individual in Europe, (with the exception perhaps of Morgagni,) only discovered the appearances of erosion, which he describes in the 62d vol. of the Philosophical Transactions, after thirty years of industrious research; and then he found the organ in question, much more corroded than that of Miss Burns, under circumstances which precluded every possibility of its having been occasioned by poison.

The inferences of these gentlemen, too, we are desired to take upon their own authority; although one of them acknowledged on his cross-examination, that he had never seen *Morgagni de Causis et Sedibus Morborum;* a work so highly useful to every medical practitioner; but indispensibly so to one who would be looked up to as competent to assign the causes of death, merely from the appearances observed on dissection.

Proceeding on the same train of reasoning, that what is unknown to them, cannot have an existence, they add, "such violent effects must have had an adequate cause; and we know no

other way of explaining their effects, but that which we have adopted." Alas! Gentlemen, how few of the diseases which destroy life by the most violent symptoms are any of the profession (yourselves excepted) competent to explain, by assigning for them their true and adequate causes! Are Spasms of the stomach; Iliac Passion; Spasmodic Colic; *Cholera Morbus*, Inflammation of the Stomach and Intestines, *always* produced by "some active agent that has been administered?" In the defect of any known cause for a symptom or a disease which occasions death, are we to have recourse to poison? Rather adopt the sentiments of a great author and say, "If we have not explored the Magellanic Regions, let us not people them with Patagons."

I shall now take the liberty of transcribing a case from Dr. *Percival's Medical Ethics*, which I conceive to be in support of the arguments I have adduced, to prove the uncertainty of assigning the cause of a symptom, from appearances only.

"*Jane Hampson*, aged four, was admitted an out-patient of the Infirmary, Feb. 11th, 1791. The female organs were highly inflamed, sore, and painful; and it was stated by the mother, that the child was as well as usual the preceding day, when

she complained of making water. This induced the mother to examine the parts affected, when she was surprised to find the appearances as above described. The child had slept two or three nights in the same bed with a boy, fourteen years old; and had complained that morning of having been hurt by him very much, in the night.

" Leeches and other external applications, together with appropriate internal remedies were prescribed; but the debility encreased, and on the 20th February, the child died. The Coroner's inquest was taken, previously to which the body was inspected, and the abdominal and thoracic *viscera* were found to have been free from disease. The circumstances above related, having been proved to the satisfaction of the Jury, and being corroborated by the opinion I gave, that the child's death was occasioned by external violence, a verdict of murder was returned against the boy with whom she had slept, a warrant was therefore issued to apprehend him; but he had absconded; a circumstance which was considered as a confirmation of his guilt, when added to the circumstantial evidence alledged against him.

" Not many weeks had elapsed, however, before several similar cases occurred, in which there

was no reason to suspect, that external violence had been offered ; and some in which it was absolutely certain that no such injury could have taken place. A few of the patients died, although from the novelty and fatal tendency of the disease, more than common attention was paid to them. I was then convinced that I had been mistaken, in attributing Jane Hampson's death to external violence, and I informed the Coroner of the reasons which had produced this change of opinion. The testimony I gave was designedly made public ; and the friends of the boy hearing of it, prevailed upon him to surrender himself.

" When he was called to the Bar at Lancaster, the Judge informed the Jury, that the evidence adduced was not sufficient to convict him ; that it would give rise to much indelicate discussion if they proceeded on the trial ; and that he hoped, therefore, they would acquit him, without calling any witnesses. With this the Jury immediately complied.

" The preceding narrative may teach the young Surgeon to act with great circumspection, when called upon to give an opinion in cases which are involved in any degree of obscurity.— It behoves him to consider well the important

duty he has to discharge both to an individual, and to the community, and he makes himself responsible for the consequences which may result from the influence of his judgment on the minds of the jury."

Here, then, is an instance of a disease proceeding from a natural cause, so much *alike* what would be produced by external violence, that a man of great practice and experience, did not, at first, hesitate in referring it to the latter. In consequence of which, a suspected, but innocent person, would have been tried for his life, and probably convicted, had not an accession of similar cases fortunately come under the medical practitioner's observation; and convinced him, that what he had believed to be a *fact*, had no other foundation than an *erroneous conjecture.*

We now proceed to the other method, by which (in defect of any proof that a poisonous article had been taken; or found in the body,) it might be inferred that death was produced by that cause; which will be from *experience*, and *observation* of the effects which these substances produce on the stomach and intestines. Thus, supposing a person in health to have taken the poisonous articles; and that the usual symptoms attendant on such

a case ensued, which, in the course of a short time, terminated in death; if upon examination of the stomach of a person thus circumstanced, an erosion of so particular a nature was observed, that from the witness having seen the same thing, in repeated instances, he could not be mistaken in the appearances; such a one, speaking to an insulated symptom, and reasoning from effect to cause, might, when referring it to poison, be held deserving of all credit. But this is so far from being the case with these Gentlemen, that, as it is the *only* instance of the sort, which has come under their observation, they have endeavoured to supply the defect of their knowledge in the human subject, by experiments *since* made on *Dogs*, which they have deprived of life, by various poisonous articles.

But these are so far from countenancing the opinion they have assumed, of an *erosion without any concomitant marks of inflammation*, being a proof that it has been occasioned by some *acrid mineral substance*, that they are in direct contradiction to their inference.

All the accounts we have ever had of the effects of arsenic, or corrosive sublimate, agree in stating, that their action is, in the first instance,

to produce irritation and pain in the living fibre of whatever part of the body they are applied to; and consequently in the stomach and intestines particularly, (being parts endued with great sensibility,) and subsequently, inflammation, and gangrene. In conformity to these observations, the dogs killed by these articles, in their experiments, exhibited, more or less, marks of inflammation in the coats of the stomach.*—Had the quantity given been sufficient to go further, and produce gangrene; is it not reasonable to suppose, that the eroded parts would have been surrounded by marks of inflammation? But why, at this time of day, do we ask the question? Inflammation, in its *highest* and *most violent degrees*, is *known* to ensue, whenever arsenic or corrosive sublimate have been taken into the stomach, in a concentrated state.

But although no erosion was produced in any of their experiments, they find that animals may be destroyed by a dose so small, that its presence cannot afterwards be detected by the nicest chemical tests; and hence they infer, that the failure of discovering the poisonous articles, suspected to have been taken, in Miss Burns' stomach, was no proof that they had not been taken. But here we have evidence of the deficient part of their

* Page 28 of their "Vindication."

proof, viz. *that it was known to have been actually received into the stomach of the animals;* in her case, it was the point in dispute.

The result of these Gentlemen's reasoning and experiments, amounts, then, to these inferences: That, although there may be no evidence of the poisonous article being administered, or found in the body of the deceased. No erosion of the stomach or intestines; no gangrene; and scarcely inflammation of these parts; yet a person may be inferred to have died of the effects of poison. It seems, then, all that is necessary to convict any one of the crime of murdering by poison, is, a malicious person to accuse, and a credulous medical witness to give evidence of the belief. Were these inferences to be adopted, it would compleatly *invert* the leading maxim in our criminal code, *that it is better ten guilty persons should escape, than one innocent man suffer.*

On the contrary, I am induced, as far as the opinion of so feeble an individual as myself goes, to conclude that, in our present state of medical knowledge, the similarity of inflammation, gangrene, and erosion of the stomach and intestines, when they arise from poison, or from natural causes, is such, as to render it difficult, if not

impossible, to distinguish from which they have proceeded; unless there be also evidence, (either direct or circumstantial) of the deceased person having taken the poisonous article; or that it has been found in the body.—With one or both of these concomitant, the proof would be compleat; without them, defective*.

We now come to the *third* part of my subject, the question respecting the *Pregnancy* of the much injured Miss Burns.

In any event, and in the most unfavourable point of view, she was not the *culprit* but the *victim;* and if, as the authors of the "Vindication" contend, in the frailty of her nature, she yielded to the blandishments of a seducer; if her

* Since this pamphlet has gone to the press, I have seen the last number of the *London Medical Review*, in which the *Vindication*, &c. is noticed, and it gives me much satisfaction to find, that the sentiments of the authors of that respectable publication accord with mine, on the subject of the appearances, in the stomach of Miss Burns. They think that the authors of the Vindication "in delivering their report to the coroner, acted neither wisely, cautiously, nor charitably."—And on the contrary, "that the part which Dr. Carson took, tended in a most useful way to counteract the too bold, and consequently dangerous opinions, which the examiners of the body held out to the coroner and the public."

death was occasioned by the base and cowardly means of poison, from that hand, to which of all others she had a right to look up for support and protection; could not the extinction of her life atone, at least in this world, for her transgression? If the stern genius of chastity, in a doubtful mood, refused to drop a tear on her grave; pity might be allowed to throw a cloud of obscurity over her remains; and they might be permitted to mingle silently with her parent earth, until the hand of time swept into one common oblivion, the memory of the oppressor and the oppressed. Instead of which, those parts, over which modesty draws a veil, never to be removed, but from necessity, and with reluctance, are brought forward into the glare of public notice, as the subject of anatomical investigation, and medical controversy; not for the purposes of justice, but of victory; and as the instrument of the triumph of the opinions of one set of men, over those of another. The question whether the appearances in her womb proceeded from pregnancy, or from another cause, could not *since* the trial, affect the *Life* of Mr. Angus, but her *chastity*. Perhaps too, the *medical evidences* for the prosecution, lay a greater stress upon the *mere pregnancy* of Miss Burns bringing criminality home to Mr. Angus, than the *legal authorities* do. These medical gentlemen,

indeed, tell us, that a principal part of the charge against the prisoner was, " that he had used means to procure an abortion." It was of course necessary, on the part of the prosecution, to prove pregnancy; otherwise the charge would fall to the ground. But the scope of the whole charge against the prisoner was, if I understand it, that he, knowing her to be pregnant, was privy to the administering of some drug to procure an abortion, which was of so deleterious a nature, as to occasion her death. The mere circumstance of her having been pregnant, and having parted with a *Fœtus*, did not *necessarily* implicate Mr. Angus. To do this required the proof of other connecting circumstances.

The pregnancy of Miss Burns, and her having been delivered of a child, as the learned judge informed the jury, " was not the question they were trying there; and if there was nothing more than the concealment of the birth of a bastard child, this is not the circumstance you are to enquire into." Page 283 of the Trial.*

* " There may have been a connection, and this connection may have produced a child, yet the concealment may have been no more than the concealment of the birth of a bastard child. If so, it has certainly been very dexterously concealed: but though the case meant to be made out on the part of the Pro-

It is not my intention to enter farther into the legal inferences, but I would refer any one desirous of being acquainted with them, to the learned Judge's charge, in the printed Trial; all that I contend for is, that supposing Miss Burns to have borne a child, and concealed its birth, that she would have been merely subject to the penalties of the Act of George 3d, 43, c. 56: and that the establishing a charge of incontinency, against a helpless female, (whose character during life was, as far as I can make out, irreproachable) by the anatomical investigation of her womb, after death; has never been resorted to, except in the case of a most flagitious criminal, whose life has been forfeited to the injured laws of her country.

The Pregnancy of Miss Burns was attempted to be proved by two kinds of evidence on the Trial, 1st, by persons who had observed her appearance in her life-time: and 2dly, by the appearances discovered in her womb by dissection.

I do not much wonder at the medical gentlemen not availing themselves of the testimony of the witnesses, who endeavoured to establish the

secution, supposes the birth to have taken place, yet the concealment of what had happened did not necessarily imply the charge of murder." *Judge's Charge p.* 283 *of the Trial.*

charge of pregnancy against Miss Burns, in consequence of the observations they had made on her shape during her life; because I conceive it to have been as defective and exceptionable as ever was brought into a court of justice. It was taken from the mere size of her waist, by persons with whom she had very little intercourse.

Encrease of size of the waist, and prominency of belly, occur so much more frequently in the sex from pregnancy, than from any other cause, that it is natural enough for persons to say, in a common way, that a woman is with-child, when she is enlarged in that part. But however harmless an opinion, thus cursorily formed may be, when no bad consequences are attached to it; the case is widely different where character and even life is staked upon its correctness. It then becomes an indispensible duty to scrutinize the grounds upon which it is formed, and to enquire whether the same appearances may not be produced by other causes.

In fact, it is well known, not merely to the faculty, but to almost every one besides, that encreased size of the waist, and prominency of the belly, are not peculiar to pregnancy; but will also be produced by many other disorders, to

which the sex is liable. It would be an unnecessary task to recapitulate what must occur to every one, who turns his thoughts to the subject. But so far are many of these disorders, from being ascertained with the happy facility of a cursory glance of the eye, as these witnesses have undertaken to do; that they sometimes cannot be distinguished from pregnancy, but with great difficulty, even by the most experienced medical practitioners, after repeated and minute examinations.

But, whilst the pregnancy of Miss Burns has been attempted to be established on the weakest and most incompetent proof; the opinions which refer the appearances of protuberance to another cause, rest (if other witnesses are to be believed) upon evidence, at once rational and conclusive. It is given by persons with whom she was in habits of intimacy; who had been acquainted with her for years; and to whom she had made complaints of impaired health, in the confidence of friendship:—who had seen her shape, not only when she was in her cloaths, but when she was undressed and in bed. If these persons do not completely establish a case of dropsy, as distinguished from pregnancy, I am at a loss to say by what means it can be ascertained.

These persons tell us that Miss Burns had been in a declining state of health for " so long a time as two or three years before she died ;" that " her belly became enlarged; and, as this encreased, her bosom became flatter." That she was " puffled and out of breath." That she replied to an observation of one of the witnesses on the flatness of her bosom, " that she was not half so plump as she used to be." " That she was become thin, and not half the person she used to be." That she said " she thought herself going very fast" a twelvemonth before her death ; and that " she was as large a twelvemonth before, as when she died."*

Now, I would ask any impartial medical practitioner, whether this account is applicable to a case of pregnancy or dropsy ?

Before I proceed to notice the proofs of Miss Burns' pregnancy deduced from *anatomical observations*, I must remind my readers that they rest solely on *these*. They are not corroborated by any of the usual convincing circumstances. There has been no discovery of a *Fœtus*, nor of the usual attendants on child-bearing: no marks on her cloaths or bedding; no alteration of the furni-

* Page 189, &c. of Angus's Trial.

ture or linen in the rooms where she lay, notwithstanding the most diligent search which ingenuity could devise, or industry practice, has been resorted to for the purpose. The doors of the rooms in which Miss Burns resided were never bolted; and the servants had access to her at all times, both by day and by night; and as they had only been two months in the family, they were the less to be suspected of having entered, as accomplices, into any deep-laid scheme, which required confidence and secrecy.*

The circumstances on which the opinion is founded, that the *Uterus* of Miss Burns had lately parted with a Fœtus, were, the enlarged size of that *viscus* (nearly that of a bullock's heart); a mark at the bottom, which had the appearance as if a *Placenta* had been recently detached; and the dilated state of the mouth.

On the other hand, a question arises, whether these marks are so decidedly peculiar to pregnancy,

* The impossibility of such a transaction having occurred without the knowledge of the female servants, was so strongly impressed upon the minds of the parties for the prosecution, that the cook was taken up and imprisoned, as an accomplice, and finally liberated, that she might become King's Evidence; in which character she appeared in Court.

that they could not be produced by other causes; such as a mole, polypus, or particularly that species of hydropic disorder, called Hydatids?

That these morbid substances are produced and nourished in the cavity of the human womb, and that they are attached to its internal surface by a matter resembling in form, and performing the same offices as a Placenta, is well ascertained.

These Gentlemen, however, undertake to speak decidedly on the subject; and say, that the mark on the bottom of the Uterus has proceeded from the detachment of a Placenta, and from no other cause. But are they in possession of that knowledge from *observation* and *experience*, which will satisfy an impartial person, who does not choose to rest upon an *ipse dixit?* In fact, it turns out that this *Uterus*, so dilated; and with this mark, whether from a Placenta or any other cause, was the *first* and *only* case of the kind that any of them had seen.

These gentlemen seemed conscious of *this* defect; and, notwithstanding their *original* advantage of numbers, and that they had the accordance of several of their brethren in Liverpool, they thought that further support of their opinion was

advisable to be procured. And with this view, Mr. Hay took the Uterus to London, and laid it before several very respectable medical characters, (I admit), to obtain their sentiments respecting it. (Why he omitted also to take the *Stomach*, certainly the more material part, is best known to himself.) But as it was with a view to determine a matter in dispute, between Dr. Carson and himself, I do think, upon any principle of fairness, the Doctor should have had notice of the intention; and, if he chose, had the power of appearing before a Court, where his opinions were to be tried.

After all, what is it that any of the Gentlemen who condescend to tell us their reasons, ground their opinion upon? for some of them seem to have had Lord Mansfield's maxim in their eye, (and he was a very prudent man), to give their opinions, but not their reasons. As far as I can collect, it comes to this, that the mark left at the bottom of the womb, must have been where a placenta had been attached, belonging to a fœtus: because it was *larger* than any hydatid placenta. (I presume that had fallen under their observation.)*

* The Liverpool Gentlemen, in page 31 of their "Vindication," say, "No form of dropsy could occasion that mark (on the bottom of the womb). No dropsy could explain the extraordinary enlargement and dilatation of the uterine vessels

The impossibility of the mark in Miss Burns' case, being referable to that species of dropsy, which is termed Hydatids, is then brought into very little room, viz. that there is no medium of the attachment of these substances to the Uterus of so large dimensions *as four inches and a half diameter.* (the size of the mark alluded to.)

The authors of the "Vindication" have furnished a case so much in point that I shall select it, in preference to any other. In page 65, Mr. Kendrick gives an account of one of his patients, "who was affected with the symptoms of pregnancy; at the end of three months she enlarged faster than usual. Between the fourth and fifth month she was seized with *hæmorrhage.* In ten days after that, pains came on attended with encreased discharge; and she voided about three

within that mark. On these two facts, viz. the placental mark, and the enlarged vessels on that part of the uterus, we take our firm and decided stand."

But the *Placenta* of an hydatid mass is connected with the uterus by vessels containing *red blood:* and an *hæmorrhage* follows the detachment of the Placenta of an Hydatid substance, as well as of that of a Fœtus. The vessels in the part from which it is detached, will, of course, be *enlarged* and *dilated* in the one case, as well as in the other.—How, then, is the distinction so very obvious?

pints of Hydatids. He examined them, and found the medium of their attachment to the Uterus, was a *small Placenta*, about the size of *half-a-crown.*"

We have, then, from themselves, a case where the Uterus must have been distended to a greater capacity than they found that of Miss Burns, without pregnancy.* We have a disorder which was nourished by a placenta like substance, which had adhered to the interior surface of the womb; we have an *hæmorrhage ensuing on its separation; a proof that it was nourished by vessels transmitting red blood.* And as this Hydatid *Placenta* had attained a diameter of *two inches* in the course of four or five months; might it not also have attained an equal size with the mark found in the womb of Miss Burns, if it had remained and continued to encrease for four or five months longer? And it should be remembered, that it was proved by two witnesses, that Miss Burns' encrease of size was of more than a year's standing.

These gentlemen have spoken of the *dilatation*

* Referring to the size to which the Uterus is capable of being distended by these morbid substances; we have numerous instances, not only of its equalling, but exceeding the bulk of any impregnated womb.

of the Os Uteri as being another reason for believing that the womb had lately parted with a *fœtus*. Dr. Gerard, who is an experienced Accoucheur; however, admits that this was the first Uterus he had ever seen in the situation of Miss Burns, and that he had "never seen the womb of a woman who had died of a dropsical Uterus."* And yet he says "the dilatation of the neck of the womb (here) could not have arisen in a dropsical Uterus." Now, in Mr. Kendrick's case, inserted in the "Vindication" p. 65, he states "that there were voided from the Uterus, Hydatids to the amount of three pints; that the medium of their attachment to the Uterus was a small Placenta, about the size of half-a-crown. To this Placenta they were attached by small footstalks, not unlike an *immense bunch of grapes*." Now, I should be glad to know how the Doctor can account for a mass of this magnitude coming away, without a dilatation of the mouth of the womb?

Upon the whole, the matter in dispute appears to be reduced to this single point, whether it be

* *Dropsical Uterus*, is so vague a term that it is difficult to affix a precise meaning to it. But the most common species is that which is termed *Hydatids*, and certainly having a dropsical disposition.

possible for the *placenta-like substance*, by which Hydatids (and similar morbid matters) are attached to the inside of the womb, and to which they are *connected by blood-vessels;* in any case, *to be of so large a size as an ordinary Placenta.* If this should *be possible*, and if the connecting medium of a bunch of Hydatids, should be found as large as a common Placenta: I think it must be evident, that it will be difficult, if not impossible, to distinguish the difference of the *mark left in the Uterus*, by the one, or the other of these causes.

The authors of the "Vindication" rest much of the confidence of their opinion on the impossibility of these *footsalks* ever attaining to this size; —and they say "it exceeds all bounds of credibility to believe, that, in this case, Hydatids could have adhered to the Uterus by a common footstalk, whose base was equal to four inches diameter." What, then, will they say to the following instance in opposition to their opinion, which I received from Liverpool, a few days ago, from Dr. Carson.

"Mrs. B. now in her 46th year, is married, and has had six children, the youngest, now three years of age. Since April last, she has not enjoyed a good state of health, which she supposed

had been affected by occurrences of a depressing nature. She supposed that she had become pregnant towards the end of May. About the seventh or eighth week, she had a considerable flooding, and was supposed to be in danger of miscarrying. From this time until she parted with an hydatid mass, she was seldom free from a small discharge of a dark-coloured fluid. Her size gradually encreased; the mammæ became enlarged, and her health and feelings were precisely similar to those she had experienced in former pregnancies, so that she had no doubt of her being pregnant. On the 24th of December last, when, according to her own reckoning, she had reached the 7th month, she was seized with strong and regular labour pains, attended with very profuse hæmorrhage. *Mr. M'Culloch*, who was called in, found her sinkink from the loss of blood. Upon examination, he found a large compressible substance, filling up the *Os Uteri*, which he supposed to be *a placenta.* With a view to effect a speedy delivery, he introduced his hand into the Uterus, which was easily accomplished—a large mass was instantly discharged, and the Uterus underwent that contraction which usually takes place after the delivery of a child. The flooding abated. The body that was discharged did not, as was expected, prove to be a child, but a large collection of hy-

datids. Mr. M'Culloch, at this time, only examined the external appearance of the mass. In the mean time, a report of the case having reached my ears, I had an opportunity of witnessing the first minute examination of its composition on the following day. It was covered by a thin membranous film, on every part excepting where it had adhered to the womb. Within this covering was contained a collection of hydatids of various sizes, from that of a pin's head to that of a large grape. These hydatids were joined in clusters, and were connected to each other by strong elastic ligamentous filaments on footstalks (pediculi) to a fleshy mass which was *rather larger than a common sized placenta*,* *at the full period*, and which formed the medium of attachment between the clusters of hydatids and the womb. The part of this mass, of the extent mentioned, which had adhered to the womb was rough, vascular, and uniform, and must, unquestionably, have left a mark upon the surface of the womb, similar to that produced by the separation of a real placenta.

"We examined the whole mass with the greatest care, with a view to discover the embryo

* Seven inches and a half one way, and eight inches and a half the other.

of a child, but nothing bearing any resemblance to such a substance was to be found.

All the particulars of this case, so far as I was not myself a witness, have been received from the Surgeon who attended her, Mr. M'Culloch; and the whole has been submitted to the correction and approval of that gentleman. The mass is still in a state of preservation, and was examined soon after its separation from the body, by several other medical gentlemen of this place."

Before I finally close my reflections, (which have been, in a manner, extorted from me) I shall briefly advert to a very extraordinary proposition, which these gentlemen have made, at page 84 of their "Vindication:" That all the medical witnesses who may be summoned on any trial, as well for the crown, as for the prisoner; for the plaintiff and defendant, should *hereafter*, meet, previous to the trial, and settle what evidence they should respectively give; lest the credit of the profession should be injured by discordant opinions. As this would go to overturn the hitherto established rules of evidence, observed on such occasions, it appears to be a change of greater importance, than even these gentlemen are competent to operate. The witnesses on dif-

ferrent sides of a cause, have, hitherto, been accustomed to look upon themselves as distinct parties, betwixt whom there could be no communication; and that to obtain the ends of justice, by the discovery of the whole truth, they ought to reserve their particular opinions, free from tamper or bias, until they were delivered in court; when the weight due to each, individually, would be appreciated by an impartial jury. Certainly, in cases of life and death, if there existed reasonable differences of opinion, as to medical conclusions, the prisoner should have the benefit of the uncertainty.

It appears, however, that were the arrangement proposed, to be adopted, still their intentions could not be accomplished, unless another alteration was also introduced, viz. that counsel should not be allowed to *cross-examine* the medical evidences, who had thus nicely adjusted their opinions, and perhaps their speeches. Because, to go no farther than a late trial; an aukward question might derange a long chain of well-connected inferences; and entirely change the aspect of the conclusion intended to have been drawn from the premises.

APPENDIX.

Since writing the foregoing pages, I have met with two cases of holes in the stomach which bear a strong resemblance to that of Miss Burns. They are recorded in the Volume of the *Histoire de la Societie Royale de Medicine* for the year 1786, under an article entitled " Observations on spontaneous openings in the stomach and intestines."

The first case, is that of a man of 26 years of age, who died after an illness of eight days. Upon opening the body, a hole was found in the anterior and superior part of the stomach (the same part as in Miss Burns) of about two inches and a half diameter; the circumference of which was *extremely thin*, a *little jagged*, and *black*.

The other, was of a girl about five years of age, who died after an illness of three weeks. On opening the body, the stomach was the only part diseased. It had a hole in the lower part, which answers to the spleen. This hole was about three inches in diameter. *The edges tore with the slightest touch*, having been dissolved by a sanious and putrid humour. *There were no marks whatever of Inflammation either in that or the neighbouring parts.*

There does not appear to be the least suspicion, that any acrid substance taken, had occasioned these openings.

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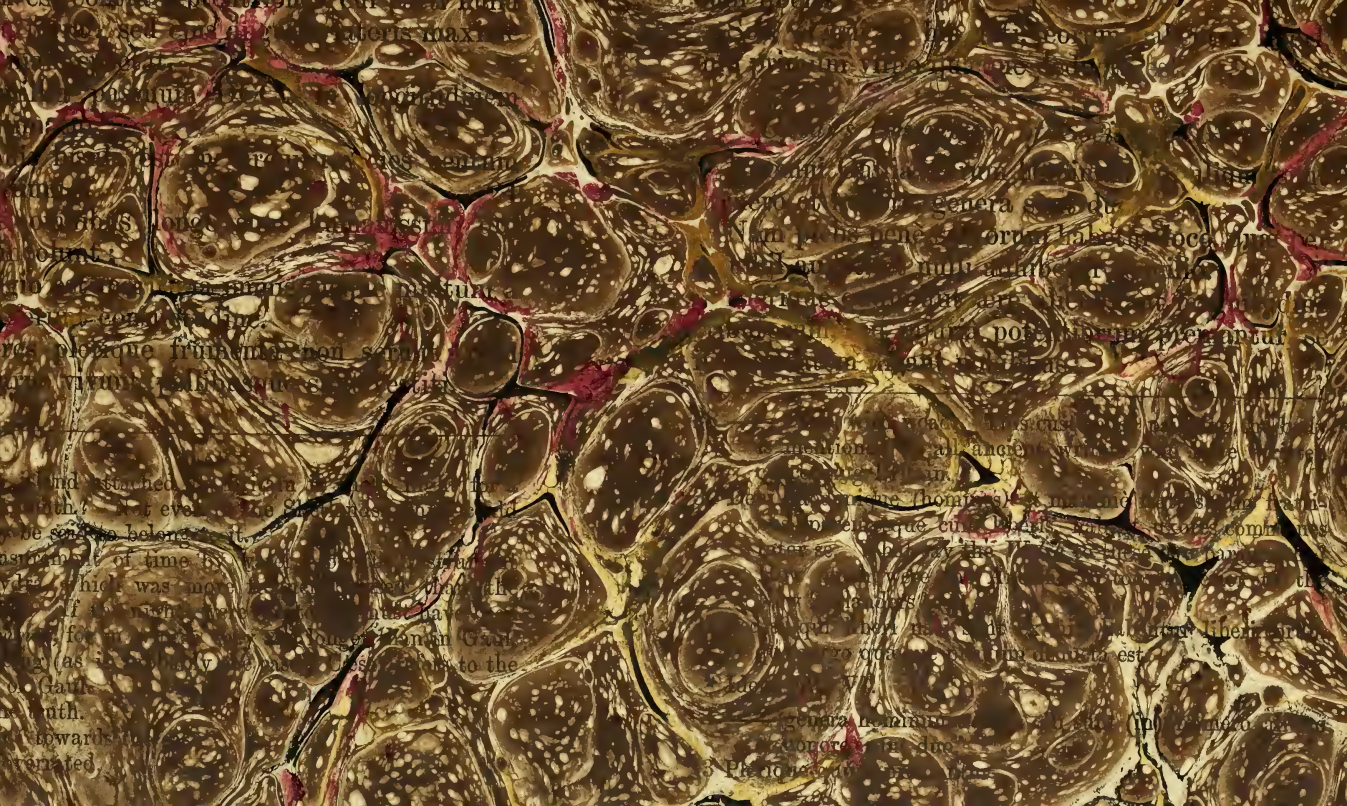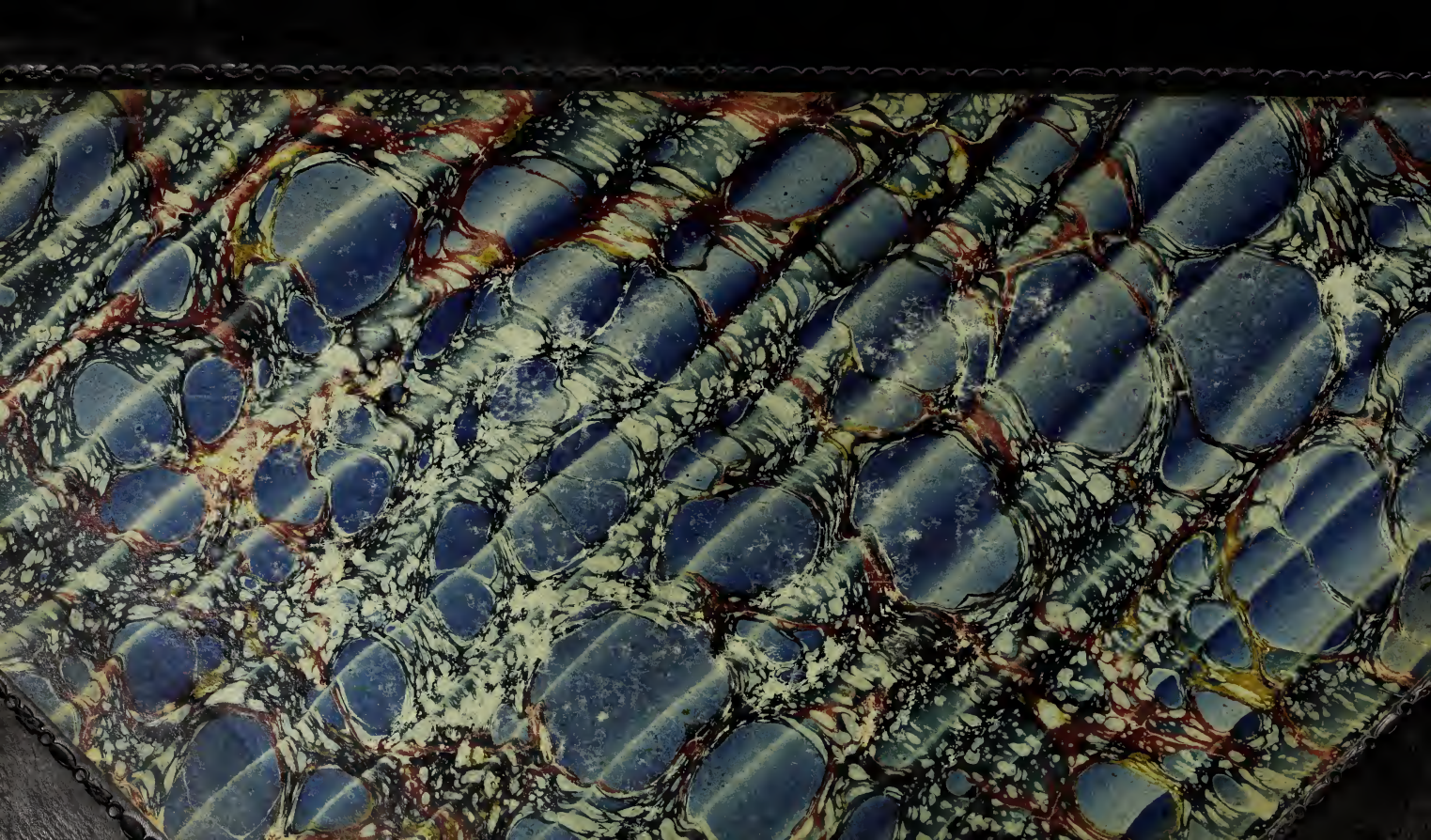
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